

## **Regionalization Task Force Meeting Notes**

### **Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

#### **Welcome and Introduction of New Members (David Reilly):**

Three Judges and two Assistant District Attorneys have joined the Task Force work group. Anne Pickle, the Assistant District Attorney of Jasper County, and Stephanie Miller, Assistant County Attorney of Johnson County were able to join us today for the meeting. The Judges are expected to join us for our October meeting; we look forward to the knowledge they will bring to our group.

The notes and documents from our meetings will be posted on our website:

<http://www.tjtd.texas.gov/aboutus/regionalization.aspx>

#### **Target Population and Diversion (Lori Robinson & Mike Meyer):**

Dr. Lori Robinson presented this information to the group. Group discussion took place regarding the definition of the target population, and this was an open and ongoing discussion. A concern expressed by the group regarding participation in the regionalization process was the sustainability of funding, especially if counties hire additional staff and open additional treatment beds. There is a concern about the necessity to hire additional staff for PREA compliance, and concerns about the relatively low salary of many of the positions. The conversation centered on funding as an issue but also other resources that counties and regions may need, such as staffing, transportation, etc. Mental health professional staffing is also a potential barrier for counties. One possible solution could be regions sharing licensed counselors, psychologists, or psychiatrists. Mr. Reilly reminded the group that each region will not be required or expected to do everything. The group agreed that providers being shared across larger regions would be ideal. Smaller counties also voiced that they are willing to drive their youth to a regional area to see a psychologist, psychiatrist, or other provider in order to meet the needs of their youth. The idea of mobile services was discussed. It was also noted that the more complicated the process to divert a youth, the less that counties may engage in the process to receive the SB 1630 diversion money.

Mr. Reilly mentioned that our sister agencies need to be included as partners, each of us working together and providing services to youth (DFPS, DSHS, HHSC). It was also discussed that the initial definition of the target population may change over time; i.e., the definition of the target population in FY 16 may change and look different in four years.

#### **Small Group Discussion and Ideas of Definitions (Chelsea Buchholtz):**

The large group broke up into three groups and presented their ideas on the definition of the target population.

**Group One** developed a checklist that assigned points for different categories. The more points a youth receives, the more a youth should be considered for an SB 1630 diversion. The lower points a youth receives, the more likely that youth would have been kept at the county level and should not be considered a diversion. If a county diverted a Capital Offender youth, then the county would automatically receive SB 1630 money.

Risk to Reoffend: (Risk is based on the county risk assessment tool.)

- High Risk to Reoffend – 3 points
- Moderate – 2 points
- Low – 1 point

Age:

- 10-12 – 3 points
- 13-14 – 2 points
- 15-16 – 1 point

Prior Research-Based Interventions/Programs:

- Two or more – 3 points
- One – 2 points
- None – 1 point

Prior placements in facilities secure or non-secure:

- Two or more – 3 points
- One – 2 points
- Never – 1 point

Prior Adjudicated Felonies:

- Two or more – 3 points
- One - 2 points
- None – 1 point

**Group Two** came up with a system that would be part narrative and part scoring. The higher the score, the more likely the youth would be diverted to TJJD.

Risk and needs assessment scores would be baseline; variables would be added to include, in order of importance:

1. Age
2. Prior placements
3. How violent was the offenses and what was their level of involvement/culpability
4. Previous felony adjudications
5. Specialized treatment needs – (would need to be subcategorized)
6. Prior interventions
7. Family background

**Group Three** came up with an automated scoring checklist. They also added an option where there could be a possible regional decision on how SB 1630 money would be spent.

The variables would be:

- Prior Placements – at least two prior placements, post-adjudication, in residential facilities.
- Offense against persons- does not include property offenses.
- High or moderate risk

After all of the groups presented the following questions and ideas were discussed:

- Can small counties have a lower starting point for applying for funds? (As larger counties have more of an ability to keep some youth that smaller counties cannot.)

- When we finalize a checklist, compare it to a sample TJJD population to see how the numbers would have turned out. Make a plan for changing the variables over time to get more diversions.
- TJJD should facilitate the placement, or pay the contracted provider for the SB1630 diversion because the medium or low county chiefs are sometimes their own CFO as well.

#### **Funding Considerations (Mike Meyer):**

Mike Meyer, Chief Financial Officer for TJJD, presented to the group on funding considerations. Mr. Meyer facilitated a discussion with the group on several topics related to funding (use, logistics, maximizing impact, etc.) with the intent of brainstorming ideas and getting initial feedback. Mr. Meyer began by explaining the appropriations for SB1630 diversions for FY 16 and 17. He noted that TJJD's understanding is that the primary intended purpose for regionalization dollars is for the placement of youth closer to home and that this interpretation comes from text included in the bill, conversations and deliberations during session, and the methodology for calculating appropriations. However, Mr. Meyer noted that the overriding goal of the bill is to keep kids shallower in the system, and that TJJD is beginning the planning process by considering other ideas to support the success of regionalization, such as programs, services, aftercare, etc. He reported that the caveat remains that the final plan may not include all ideas, but that TJJD is in continual communication with leadership offices to ensure consistency with intent. The group discussion touched on several subjects, including the use of funds, flow of funding, how funding may be used to maximize impact and encourage participation, and other logistical questions.

#### **Action Item for Next Meeting:**

- Talk with stakeholders and discuss the ideas regarding the target population so that their input and feedback may be included.
  - **Please forward the feedback received to Lori Robinson (lori.robinson@tjjd.texas.gov) by October 5<sup>th</sup>.** TJJD staff will review the feedback and work to develop a draft of a template utilizing the feedback. **The draft will be sent to task force members by October 13<sup>th</sup>** so that they may review and discuss with their stakeholders. The draft and feedback will be discussed during the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Begin conversations with regions and gather ideas on needed resources and wish lists.

#### **Future Meeting:**

The next Regionalization Task Force Meeting will be held on October 20<sup>th</sup> in College Station

#### **Hotel Accommodations and Meeting Location:**

Hilton College Station & Conference Center  
801 University Drive East  
College Station, Texas 77840  
979.693.7500

**Hotel reservations must be made by October 5, 2015 to secure conference rates.**

Conference rates are:

Single or Double Room Rate: \$114.00\*

Standard King or Standard Double Queens, All rates are plus tax \* or prevailing State rate, There is no fee for parking.

Please ask for the JJAT CONFERENCE as the request for the block of rooms.

- A Doodle Poll/meeting request will be sent to determine the meeting date for November.